May 20, 2012

Dear Reader,

This is my ZINE project. I chose to write about baseball because I like everything about the sport. Baseball has taught me life lessons, including how to work as a team and how to persevere through tough situations. You will find my personal narrative about my 2011 Little League season. Next, you will find my expository piece on how to bat in baseball. In my descriptive piece, I describe my experience in one of my baseball games. My fiction piece and poem are also about baseball.

I hope you like my ZINE.

Sincerely,

Bobby Kent

Baseball

I remember my Little League season in 2011. My team was called the Padres and we were not the best team in the league but we were still good. That season we only won about two games. One game during the season was called because of darkness when we were only one run down and we were up to bat next at the bottom of the inning. I knew a couple of kids on my team from school but the rest I did not know. As the season went on everyone got to know each other well and we worked as a team for the rest of the season. I was hit by a lot of pitches because some pitchers were a little wild when they throw. I got a lot of bruises on my back that season. I pitched a lot during the season as a relief pitcher and I would come in right after the starting pitcher was done. A relief pitcher comes in after the pitcher that started the game comes out. If there were runners on base I would just focus on the pitch I had to make at that moment. My nickname was Bobby K for Bobby strikeout.

Every team makes it to the playoffs and our team had our first playoff game. If we won we would move on versus the team that won in their playoff game. In the game we started scoring early and quickly. The air was warm and gnats were annoying as always when you would stand in the outfield with them circling your hat, looking to get in your eyes. I got a single in the game and I could have gotten a double but when I was running around the bases I missed first so I had to go back and touch it. By the time I touched the base the outfielders had already thrown the ball back in to the infield so there was no running now. One of my teammates got a big hit and drove me home. My team had the lead by a few runs heading into the last couple of innings. We were feeling pretty good about our chances to win. The other team came back to score two runs. After the end of the inning the game was tied and our team was up to bat. The other team had a good pitcher on the mound and he pitched a scoreless inning. They were up to bat and had to score only one run to win the game. The first batter got on base and then the second got a double. There was the third batter up with two outs with runners on first and third. The pitch came to the batter and he got a single and the run came in and they went up by one. Our team got the last out of the inning and had one last chance to bat to win. The other team’s pitcher got one then two outs against us. The batter before me came up. He got a good hit to the outfield but the center fielder came up and made the catch. Our team was sad because we lost but our coach told us that we had a great season and he was happy for us. I really liked playing for my team that season.

How to Bat in Baseball

Batting is probably the must important thing besides pitching. It is what makes the runs that win the game. To be able to bat in baseball you have to learn how to swing so you can hit the ball. Hold the bat over your right shoulder if you are a righty and hold it over the left shoulder if you’re a lefty. Do not rest the bat on your shoulder for it is harder to swing. When swinging throw your arms forward so there fully extended and then pull them back over your other shoulder. If your not getting your bat around fast enough you need to either choke up on the bat or get a lighter, smaller bat. That is called bat speed. Bat speed helps you with timing, which is adjusting your swing to the pitcher’s speed. If the pitcher throws fast you might want to swing earlier and if he pitches slow swing a little later to get to the ball. Stepping when a pitcher is doing their wind up is important because you always want to be ready to hit if it is a pitch that is a strike. The umpire will sometimes give you a better call when you stand up at bat ready to swing not just standing there waiting for a walk. The correct way to stand is to put your left foot next to the top of the plate and your right next to the bottom of the plate. When swinging rotate your back foot up not off the ground but towards the pitcher. Balance after and during your swing is very important so you a can drive the ball for a big hit. Keeping your eye on the ball is what gets you a big hit and is probably the most important thing of them all. If you do not keep your eye on the ball you will swing and miss. It also helps you get on base by a walk and then your teammates can a get a big hit so you can score.

Learning what’s a ball or a strike is very pivotal to hitting because swinging at a non-hittable pitch does not get you a hit. In fact you will swing at thin air instead of making contact. The strike zone is from your shoulders to your knees. Anything away from there is a ball. Expanding the strike zone is a good idea when you have one or two strikes on you. Expanding the strike zone means you swing at anything close to the strike zone. Once you reach higher levels in Little League, some pitchers can throw a slower pitch to get your timing messed up. Staying focused and staying back on slow pitches is key to hitting. Striking out swinging is so much better than staying frozen like a stone because you want to hit the ball. If you take my advice about learning how to stand, swing and keeping your eye on the ball will help you get a big hit.

The Baseball Field

I get out of the car and smell the pleasant, damp spring air as the gloomy clouds hover overhead. I run down the tough, grassy hill to my coach, who is waiting in the strong zoo-caged field. The field smells awful like a wet basement after last night’s rain. It looks ruined, run-down and rejected. I take out my plump leather glove from my unloved bag and it feels soft and warm on my hand. Stepping on the rough and neglected dirt, I start to jog past the infield into the jungle-like grass. I begin to throw around the hard powder-covered baseball to my teammates far away. Standing in the deep grass in the outfield and lingering around the area, I wait for a deadly baseball to come into the cushion of my glove. The annoying obsessive gnats try to get in my way by circling my head and making it hard to see. Whenever there is a sudden pause, the gnats, as if almost on cue, enter my eyes.

Pregame warm-up is over and after a couple quick outs at the start of the game, my coach calls my name across the field. I automatically know why he is calling me. As I run through the wet grass like an explorer trying to cut through the jungle, I see coach walking toward the pitcher’s mound to meet me. He hands me the well-worn game ball and with a big grin on his face, tells me to persevere and get us out of the inning.

There I am, standing on the hard pitcher’s mound with all eyes on me. The count is 2-2 and I feel the pressure. My heart is racing but I know what I have to do. I will show no emotion to the batter. I will throw strikes. I thrust my left leg up and extend my right arm behind me like a straight line. I fire off a missile intended for the tough, open glove of my catcher. The ball hurls forward as if on a train track following a path. “You’re out!” the umpire screams loudly. The impatient batter wiffs at thin air and then retreats back to his side of the cage. The hard-fought inning is over and my team heads in to bat.

I am up at bat. I look the bullet-throwing pitcher right in the eyes. I see he is determined to strike me out, but I can’t let that happen. The pitcher fires the pitch. My swing is right on time. My bat rises from my shoulder and meets the ball with a loud clank. The line drive ball that I hit sails right past the surprised third baseman. I drop my bat and it hits the ground with a thud. I start to run toward first base. I run faster than I have ever run before. I see the stretched out first baseman ready to catch the dart coming his way. I hurl myself onto the base. I want it. I beat the throw to first. I hear the roar of steady clapping coming from the stands. This is why I love baseball.

The All Star Game

Tommy and Johnny are brothers. They both love baseball. Tommy is a superstar in Little League. He is the best player on his team. His younger brother Johnny also plays baseball, but isn’t the star. The brothers are supportive of each other and go to each other’s games. There is an All-Star Little League game coming up and both Tommy and Johnny try out for the team. They both really want to make it because they want to play together.

On the morning that the roster is released, the boys eat their breakfast quickly and head over to the baseball field to see the All-Star roster. They can’t wait to see if they are on it. They get to the field and look at the list and see that only Tommy made the team. Johnny is listed as bench in case one of the players is injured. Johnny is disappointed that he did not make the team. Tommy is upset for Johnny too because the two of them are a great duo. Even though the brothers won’t be playing together, Johnny will be there on the bench to cheer Tommy on.

The All Star game is finally here and Johnny is there on the bench to support Tommy as he promised he would be. It is the bottom of the ninth inning with two outs and Tommy’s team is losing by one. There is a runner in scoring position on second base. Tommy is up to bat. He will be the winning run if he crosses the plate. The pitcher throws four balls and Tommy is walked. To everyone’s surprise, the coach calls Johnny’s name and tells him to get his batting gear on because he is going to bat. Coach wants Johnny to pinch hit for the pitcher. Johnny steps up to the plate with the pressure on him. The third base coach gives Johnny a sign to take the pitch because his brother is going to steal second base. Johnny takes the pitch and his brother steals second. The count is no balls, one strike. Ball one. Ball two. Strike two. Ball three. The count is 3 balls and 2 strikes. Johnny’s heart is beating fast because the game is riding on this next pitch. The pitch comes and Johnny blasts one into right field. The runners come home as Johnny is touching second. Tommy’s team has won! Tommy’s teammates pile on top of Johnny. He is the All-Star game MVP!

Game Day

Baseball

The crack of the bat

The smell of grass

The game is underway.

Runners sliding into base

The throw is late

The umpire shouts “Safe!”

The crowd yells out a big “Hurray!”

The shortstop flips to second

Who fires onto first

For a perfect double play.

The pitcher hurls

The organ plays

The home team wins today.

Photo from Yahoo Images

[](http://images.search.yahoo.com/r/_ylt=A0PDoS9JkrlPaCAAEO.jzbkF;_ylu=X3oDMTBpcGszamw0BHNlYwNmcC1pbWcEc2xrA2ltZw--/SIG=11uql0sb9/EXP=1337590473/**http:/www.sportbetaustralia.com/baseball/)